



FROM SILVER SCREEN TO BALLOT BOX: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF UPENDRA AND PRAKASH RAJ ON YOUTH VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN BENGALURU

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ABSTRACT

'From Silver Screen to Ballot Box: A Quantitative Study of the Political Influence of Upendra and Prakash Raj on Youth Voting Behaviour in Bangalore' examines the political power of regional film stars turned politicians and their role over urban youth. The research focuses on 18–30-year-old voters who are social media followers of Upendra or Prakash Raj especially Instagram, where these two individuals actively post political updates and campaign publicity. Responses from Bangalore were gathered through a pre-formatted questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The study examines how interaction with these public personalities on social media affects political consciousness, assesses their perceived credibility and genuineness as political leaders, and tests the function of emotional and ideological appeals in determining young adult voting behaviour. The results reveal that Upendra's Prajakeeya ideology attracts reformist youth, and Prakash Raj's activism on issues attracts socially aware voters. The research underscores the central role played by digital platforms in organizing political participation and perception-making among young voters. It adds to the expanding literature on celebrity politics and online political communication by illustrating how film icons can use their public image to weigh politically in a digitally networked urban electorate.

KEYWORDS: Youth Voting Behaviour, Celebrity politics, Social media, Instagram, Upendra, Prakash Raj

INTRODUCTION

Politics and cinema have been closely intertwined in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh for many years, with politicians such as M.G. Ramachandran and N.T. Rama Rao converting film stardom into political authority. Karnataka, while traditionally less susceptible to this phenomenon, is increasingly experiencing a transition with the political forays of Upendra and Prakash Raj. Their contrasting styles Upendra's ideology-based politics and Prakash Raj's activist, anti-party style herald new directions. Bangalore Urban, a densely urbanized and digitally informed district, offers a perfect context to study this transformation. Youth voters in this place are politically informed and subject to a variety of opinions on digital media, but frequently disappointed with mainstream politics. Celebrities as candidates might make headline news, but whether that translates into electoral mandate is questionable. This research asks that question, bridging a knowledge gap on Karnataka's changing celebrity politics scenario.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Prasad, R., (2025) - Celebrity Power: The Political Footprints of Cricketers and Cinema Stars in India

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's research, "Celebrity Power: The Political Footprints of Cricketers and Cinema Stars in India", discusses how media expansion particularly TV and the internet has augmented celebrity power in Indian politics. He discusses how celebrities such as Jayalalithaa translated screen stardom into political authority, while others such as Amitabh Bachchan and Govinda faltered because they lacked political wisdom. The study indicates that charm is not sufficient successful

celebrity politicians require governance and institutional knowledge. Prasad also refers to regional examples, for instance, Bhojpuri film stars and cricketers joining politics with little policy sophistication. Between international leaders like Reagan and Zelenskyy, he places Indian celebrity politics in the international arena, cautioning against minimizing politics to showmanship. However, he contends celebrity influence is determined by larger structures and advocates more research on long-term effects.

Mishra, S. J., Sahoo, D., (2025) - The Role of Celebrity Endorsements in Political Campaigns in India

The research "The Role of Celebrity Endorsements in Political Campaigns in India" investigates the manner in which celebrities affect voters' turnout and participation, particularly among young and new voters. Featured individuals can be read in the International Journal of All Research Education and Scientific Methods, and the work employs empirical analysis to demonstrate a strong correlation between celebrity participation and winning the elections, mainly among the use of social media. Other influences such as income, age, and favorable attitudes toward celebrities also play roles in this influence. The research brings out how parties gain by the mass popularity of celebrities and sportspeople in that they become visible and credible in various segments of voters. Although endorsements by celebrities can increase participation, the research cautions that they can divert attention from policy issues.

Watson-Lynn and Star (2019) - The growing influence of celebrity politics in India

This research “The Growing Influence of Celebrity Politics in India”, examines how Indian celebrities have evolved from entertainers to politicians. During the 2019 general election, celebrities such as Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Shah Rukh Khan, and Salman Khan utilized social media to encourage voting, posting pictures of their inked fingers to motivate fans. This social media activism is instrumental in generating political awareness. In addition to advocacy, some of the celebrities have gone into politics directly. Cricketers Gautam Gambhir and Kirti Azad, and boxer Vijender Singh, fought and won elections, capitalizing on their popularity. But celebrity politicians are effective or not is a point of contention. Some, such as Colonel Rathore, received accolades, while others, such as Sachin Tendulkar, received criticism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To investigate the impact of local film celebrities on young people’s voting trends in Bangalore Urban.
- To assess how celebrity branding and political messaging influence youth political orientations.
- To assess how the political involvement of celebrities like Upendra and Prakash Raj impacts voters aged 18–30

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How do the political forays of Upendra and Prakash Raj impact the political mindset and views of youth in urban areas
- How does fame translate into political legitimacy and electoral allegiance in Bangalore’s youth?
- What implications do political messaging, and issue-based campaigning have on the electoral behavior of young people in Bangalore Urban?

METHODOLOGY:

This research applies a quantitative descriptive approach to systematically investigate the impact of celebrity politicians on youth voting patterns in the particular setting of Indian cities. This study uses a simple random sampling method to ensure that every individual within the defined population youth aged 18 to 30 from Bengaluru had an equal chance of being selected. The survey was administered through a Google Form containing a total of 16 thoughtfully structured questions designed to gather comprehensive insights into the research topic. A total of 52 respondents participated in the survey, representing a diverse cross-section of youth across various age groups, primarily from the city of Bengaluru. This demographic concentration guaranteed that the information gathered had a broad array of viewpoints, further ensuring a broader and more representative understanding of the political impact of celebrity personalities on the youth in the cities across the region.

How likely are you to vote for a candidate based on their celebrity status and political stance?
52 responses

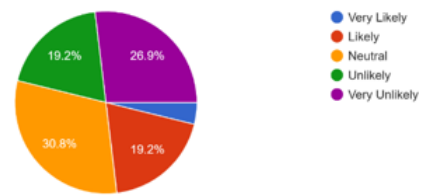


Fig. 1. Likelihood to Vote Based on Celebrity Status

This chart Fig. 1 shows that 26.9% of respondents are very unlikely to vote for a candidate based on celebrity status, while only 3.8% are very likely to do so, with most remaining neutral.

To what extent have their posts influenced your personal political opinions?
52 responses

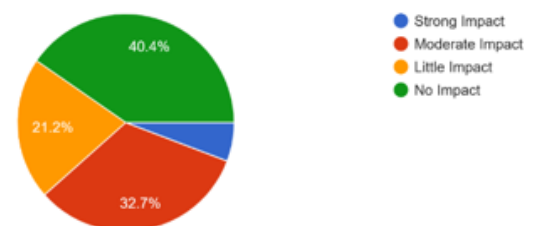


Fig. 2. Influence on Personal Political Opinions

The second chart Figure 2 reveals that 40.4% of respondents reported no impact from celebrity posts, while 32.7% felt moderate impact, 21.2% experienced little impact, and only 5.7% reported strong influence.

How emotionally appealing do you find the political messaging shared by Upendra and Prakash Raj?
52 responses

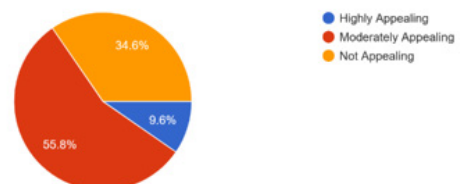


Fig 3. Emotional Appeal of Messages

This chart Fig. 3 shows that 55.8% of respondents find the political messaging by Upendra and Prakash Raj moderately appealing, while only 9.6% find it highly appealing and 34.6% do not.

FINDINGS:

This research employed a quantitative method to analyze the political impact of actors-turned-politicians Upendra and Prakash Raj. Out of 52 youth respondents, their interaction with political content was primarily occasional and involved a few of them regularly. Their posts are secondary political content but act as supporting material. Male respondents between 18 and 25 years exhibited a little more frequent use compared to females. Both advocacy and personality content was most popular, with ideological or entertainment-based posts being less influential. Upendra was perceived as more genuine, 25 of the respondents considering him somewhat or very genuine,

possibly because of his “Prajakeeya” ideology. Prakash Raj was perceived as not very genuine by 21 participants, perhaps because of mixed messages.

Social media interaction produced some enhanced political comprehension, particularly among regular interactors. Most reported that awareness “somewhat improved,” but a lesser number said there was no improvement. Female participants more frequently cited positive impacts. Both actors serve as informal political educators, generating awareness without firm ideological commitment. Emotional appeal in their communications was moderate, with some resonance but minimal long-term political effect.

DISCUSSION:

The pie chart analysis in this research provides valuable insights into the research questions, which sought to examine how celebrity politicians Upendra and Prakash Raj shape youth voting patterns in Bengaluru. The findings gathered from 52 of the targeted respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 indicate subtle patterns of political participation, authenticity perception, and content popularity among young voters following these celebrities on Instagram. It indicates that political content shared by Upendra and Prakash Raj is largely intermittent. Although some respondents follow political content by them on a regular basis, most respond only occasionally or seldom. This is consistent with the intention of determining if celebrity popularity can be converted into political legitimacy and implies that simply having social media visibility does not get consistent political interest from youth. Upendra’s posts gathered a little more frequent activity than Prakash Raj’s, particularly among 18–25-year-old males, suggesting gender and age are factors in political interest.

A second key chart reports perceptions of authenticity, in which Upendra is overall “somewhat authentic” or “very authentic,” due to his ideologically driven style via Prajakeeya. By contrast, Prakash Raj was given a greater percentage of “less authentic” ratings, indicating a loss of credibility. This differentiation aids the goal of examining how celebrity branding and political messaging shape youth opinion. Authenticity resoundingly presents itself as a major influence on the legitimacy of youth in political leaders. Preferential content, illustrated in another pie chart, also ranks high. Issue-based and hybrid-posts attracted more than ideologically or entertainment-oriented ones. This indicates that young people prioritize substance as well as character in political messaging. Emotional appeal, while existing, was only moderately successful in promoting deeper political identification.

Lastly, when questioned about the effect of emulating these celebrities on political knowledge, a significant percentage indicated that there was an improvement. Nevertheless, there was no significant change for most, supporting the notion that celebrity-driven engagement is more likely a conversation starter than a political transformation force. Such findings support the study’s aim of exploring whether fame can change young people’s voting behavior, making the conclusion that celebrity-driven influence generates interest, yet without much

changing political commitment.

LIMITATIONS:

Although this research provides insightful information regarding the influence of regional celebrity politicians on Bengaluru youth voting, it has several limitations. For one, it only targets Upendra and Prakash Raj, leaving other regional celebrities such as Jaggesh out. Two, the geographical scope is contained within Bengaluru Urban, a very urbanized and digital constituency, thereby making it easy not to generalize insights to the state of Karnataka. Its small sample size of 52 also limits the robustness of conclusions. Moreover, by concentrating on Instagram alone, the research ignores the wider digital media environment and fails to provide close scrutiny of the celebrities’ actual material.

CONCLUSION:

This research investigates the ways in which popular local actors Upendra and Prakash Raj shape the political opinion and electoral preference of young voters in Bengaluru. Drawing on feedback from 52 participants aged between 18 and 30, the research illustrates how both actors leverage their public profile and social media following to engage with a digitally connected and socially active electorate. Upendra advocates a reformist course on his Instagram-supported Prajakeeya platform, and Prakash Raj reaches out to youth disenchanted with mainstream politics through activism and forthright criticism. Instagram is central to the dissemination of their messages, with the use of posts and videos as engagement tools and as means of political discourse. Most youth interaction, however, is still occasional and passive. Mixed-issue and format content were most effective, demonstrating that youth care more about substance than about entertainment or ideology. This research contributes to the body of work on celebrity politics and illustrates how digital media influences urban Indian youth political engagement.

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